WE CLAIM:

1. A computer-implemented method for implementing a hierarchy of component object model interfaces, comprising:

defining a hierarchy of component object model interfaces, wherein an interface at a lowest level of the hierarchy inherits from an interface at the highest level of the hierarchy;

defining a first template class that is associated with the highest level of the hierarchy;

defining a second template class that inherits from the first template class and is associated with the lowest level of the hierarchy; and

instantiating the second template class with an interface as a template parameter.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the second template class inherits directly from the first template class.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the second template class inherits indirectly from the first template class.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising defining a plurality of intermediate classes in a single inheritance arrangement, one of the intermediate classes inheriting from the first template class, and the second template class inheriting from another one of the intermediate classes.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein one or more of the intermediate classes are template classes.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising defining an intermediate class, the intermediate class inheriting from the first template class, and the second template class inheriting from the intermediate class.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the intermediate class is a template class.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the interface provided as the template parameter is an interface at the lowest level of the hierarchy.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

extending the hierarchy of component object model interfaces to include a new interface defined at the lowest level of the hierarchy, wherein the new interface inherits from the interface at the highest level of the hierarchy;

defining a third template class that inherits from the first template class and is associated with the new interface defined at the lowest level of the hierarchy; and

instantiating the third template class with the new interface as a template parameter.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising defining ActiveX Template Library interface maps in the first template class and in the second template class, respectively.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising defining a plurality of intermediate classes in a single inheritance arrangement, one of the intermediate classes inheriting from the first template class, and the second template class inheriting from another one of the intermediate classes.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein one or more of the intermediate classes are template classes.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising defining ActiveX Template Library interface maps in the respective intermediate template classes.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the interface provided as the template parameter is an interface at the lowest level of the hierarchy.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:

extending the hierarchy of component object model interfaces to include a new interface defined at the lowest level of the hierarchy, wherein the new interface inherits from the interface at the highest level of the hierarchy;

defining a third template class that inherits from the first template class and is associated with the new interface defined at the lowest level of the hierarchy; and

instantiating the third template class with the new interface as a template parameter.

16. A computer-implemented method for implementing a hierarchy of component object model interfaces, comprising:

defining a hierarchy of component object model interfaces, wherein an interface at a lowest level of the hierarchy inherits from an interface at the highest level of the hierarchy;

defining a first template class that is associated with the highest level of the hierarchy;

defining a second class that inherits from the first template class and is associated with the lowest level of the hierarchy; and

providing an interface of the lowest level of the hierarchy as a template parameter to a template class directly inherited by the second class.